The COMMONWEAL

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Editors: EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.
PHILIP BURNHAM (*now on duty with the armed forces*)

HARRY LORIN BINSSE, *Managing Editor;* MICHAEL WILLIAMS, *Special Editor;* C. G. PAULDING, *Literary Editor;* JOHN C. CORT, *Associate Editor;* JOHN BRUBAKER, *Advertising Manager*

America's Bloc

ONE of the unfortunate happenings at the conference at San Francisco was the splitting of the delegates into solid blocs. The United States had the biggest, with the Latin-American nations, Liberia and the Philippines as its basic constituents and England and the Dominions handy when the chips are down. For a nation which is as relatively disinterested as the United States, the ability to swing so preponderant a portion of the votes might in one way prove a helpful element in the establishment of the United Nations organization. But it has had one unfortunate result. It has weakened confidence in the proposed Assembly of the United Nations; it has persuaded the Russians—if they needed further persuasion in the matter—to insist that the real power be lodged in the Security Council, on which the Soviets hold a permanent seat with full veto powers.

Chapultepec and its declaration of hemisphere solidarity constituted a climax of the Good Neighbor policy. And since then the big problem has been how to integrate such regional understandings into the larger framework of Dumbarton Oaks. At San Francisco, apparently, this solidarity took the form of acting in concert on such delicate matters as the admittance of Argentina. It was due to the manifest wishes of the delegates from the other Americas that the United States exerted our influence on behalf of Argentina. Certain observers have devoutly wished that our delegates had taken the opposite alternative of seeking to persuade the other Americas to oppose the dispatch of an invitation to Buenos Aires. From here it is difficult to tell whether such course would have been possible but it would certainly have been a more highly principled line of action.

In any case the Argentine matter strengthened the impression that in the Latin Americas the United States has her own neat little sphere of interest. It gives the Soviets some justification for the loose analogies by which they seek to justify unilateral actions in the Balkans, the Baltic and other borderlands. There is a gulf of difference between our South American relationships, say, and the current Czech, Jugoslav, Austrian dependency upon Soviet Russia. And we are whittling down our own big stick while the Russians are out cutting new bludgeons. Yet with the human mind's eagerness for oversimplification the Russian argument on respective influence spheres strikes home in certain minds.

The latest word from the State Department seems to indicate that the governments of the other Americas have been prevailed upon to accept the authority of the Security Council in matters in this hemisphere. That is an encouraging sign. For no effective international cooperation can be attained without certain sacrifices of immediate national interests. Chapultepec draws closer to Dumbarton Oaks. Our regional understanding has not prevented commitments that are wider. The Americas may yet constitute a consolidating element in the new organization.

A Note on War Criminals

THE present estimate that from 4,000,000 to 6,000,000 men are to be tried for war atrocities is patently absurd. Attempting to sweep in so many also provides an excellent means for making it easy for a great many culprits to escape. It is difficult to draw the line. One thing should be certain. Those who directed the prison camps which have shocked the world—and those who carried out their inhuman orders—must face the consequences. At long last it must be made clear to everyone that obedience to orders does not absolve a man from his personal responsibility for his acts. Criminal orders against which the natural conscience of man cries to Heaven must be rejected at the cost of life itself. Obedience to authority only holds when commands are lawful; underlings are not absolved because their superiors incur even greater guilt. The trials of war criminals are at best a negative business, much as they are intended to throw fear into future malefactors. But if they demonstrate in this case that obedience to infamous orders does not take away personal responsibility something positive may result.

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Trieste Again

IT IS the Italians who are raising the biggest fuss about the Tito seizure of the Adriatic port of Trieste after that city had been surrendered by the Germans to New Zealand troops. Despatches from Rome say that this Jugoslav coup has created a new surge of Italian nationalism. The Jugoslavs themselves are said to be dreaming about taking the whole Austrian province of Carinthia. There is no special reason for sparing the feelings of the Italians, but we should oppose the Tito act no less vehemently than they. Without in any way assuming that the territorial agreements thus far arrived at accord completely with justice or the wishes of the inhabitants involved, Americans have a vital interest in the achievement and maintenance of territorial settlements after this war which will contain as few as possible seeds of future wars. Nowhere is this principle more urgent than in the Balkans, where violence over age-long territorial disputes flares to such heights and aggressors are tempted to fish in troubled waters; nowhere of greater urgency than in Austrian-Italian-Jugoslav Trieste.

The real difficulty will come later: the decision as to exactly who is to possess and control the territory in each disputed case. Now it is relatively simple, for the interim procedure has already been agreed upon. As Assistant Secretary Grew has stated, the Allied Military Governments first take over and administer while all claimants to the disputed area are given a thorough hearing. After the most careful study the interested governments are to agree on a feasible territorial settlement. At present writing Tito's partisan troops are patrolling the city, while Anglo-American soldiers maintain order in Trieste's port. Unilateral Jugoslav action has succeeded to that extent. Tito's immediate withdrawal in favor of AMG is in the common interest.

Mr. Churchill Speaks

MR. CHURCHILL'S radio speech reviewing the war against Germany and pledging his country to certain principles of action for the future was notable for a number of things, some of which have received exhaustive comment on the air and in the press and some of which seem to have passed by largely unnoticed. His remarks about Mr. De Valera and the Government of Eire unquestionably reflect the bitterness of a great many English people as well as some Irish. That the seaports and airports of Southern Ireland were not available to Britain at a moment when she desperately needed not to be cut off from the outside world must surely have been a great cause of anxiety both to Mr. Churchill and to his fellow countrymen. Yet in the interests of Anglo-American understanding we cannot help regretting his reference to his strong feelings in the matter.

The question of Southern Ireland's policy during the war—a policy which found a logical if shocking conclusion to its strict neutrality in a message of condolence to Germany over the death of Hitler—is one on which honest men on both sides can differ. There is no possible question of Mr. De Valera's principles or motives; screaming liberals who like to label him and his Government fascist merely play the most irresponsible kind of politics when they do so. Historic circumstances put the Irish Government in a situation where it could scarcely have acted in any other fashion than Mr. De Valera's Government did act; it is a reasonably safe bet that any policy but one of rigid neutrality would have been disowned by the Irish people, if only because this was their first opportunity to show to all the world that they have a mind of their own and are not an appendage to Great Britain. Such feelings anyone acquainted with Irish history can readily understand. But of course the price paid is a very heavy price, and judged without regard to human frailty, some in the future will say that the price was too heavy, for it is a simple political fact that by this policy the government of Eire has largely isolated itself—for the time being—from the rest of the world and from its sympathy. By acting as he did, Mr. De Valera has almost entirely cancelled out—for the time being—the vast goodwill his people enjoyed among all non-Irish lovers of freedom. Such is the sad consequence of British political folly in the past, shaping Irish unrealism in the present.

But Mr. Churchill's tribute to Irish volunteers was fully as impassioned as his criticism of the Irish Government, and his insistence upon the fulfillment of the nobler ends for which this war was waged came as some comfort for those who had begun to wonder whether those aims had been completely forgotten. This insistence, of course, could be and has been interpreted as a part of British and American dissatisfaction with Russia, and thereby it points once more to the stiffening of the attitude of the Western nations toward the Soviets.

But more particularly significant, and very little noted, was Mr. Churchill's excursion into history which can betoken only one thing—namely, that Britain will resist, in accordance with her historic policy, any political overlordship in Europe by any single power. It should be pointed out, of course, that this does not preclude voluntary European union, but it does mean a continuance of an attitude which, though often subject to criticism, is probably not unsound. For historical reasons, it is most unlikely that any *imposed* unity in Europe will be acceptable to the highly diverse peoples of that Continent. Inevitably such attempts have

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led to tyranny and have merely served to accentuate irridentism. Hence a British policy, the motives for which are selfish and serve Britain's own interests, likewise, by and large, has preserved freedom and national aspirations in Europe. Yet because it is an explosive policy, we must hope that voluntary union will in time make it unnecessary.

Confidence and the Press

THE RECENT flurry of excitement over Edward Kennedy's premature release of the news of the German armistice has served to focus attention upon the very delicate question of confidence and the press. The ethics of this matter and its social value in modern communities are both subtle and little understood by the ordinary citizen. In Kennedy's case, there seems little doubt that there was a clear breach of ethics. Yet in extenuation it may be said that press relations at Supreme Allied Headquarters have been badly handled and have aroused genuine and proper resentment in newspaper circles. Hence part of the blame for Kennedy's action must rest with those who have through their narrowness and ineptitude built up the ill will which in Kennedy's case probably goaded him into a grossly improper breach of confidence.

Regardless of the rights and wrongs in this particular episode, it must be admitted that the press itself—not all of it, but the good here suffer for the wrongs done by the bad—is not without blame for the present lack of good feeling generally as between newspapermen and government officials of all sorts, including the military. The worst sinners in this regard have, unfortunately, been those who pride themselves on their liberal and advanced views, with the result that never has the more liberal section of the American press been weaker and less effective than it is today. Perhaps a valuable service might be performed if the more responsible elements in journalism were to make it their business repeatedly to inform the American public as to the nature of confidence and the ethics involved.

First of all it must be clearly understood, without theoretical demurrers, that in so complex a civilization as ours policies cannot be formulated and decisions arrived at in glass houses. "Open covenants openly arrived at" is a most misleading phrase. If it merely means the abolition of treaties and policies secretly formulated and then *kept secret,* it is completely sound. But if it means that the public has a right to know everything that goes on in the preliminary discussions and in the smoke-filled hotel rooms of politics, both national and international, it is sheer nonsense, sheer perfectonism. We must understand that this is a fact, a situation, one of the data of human nature, and that argument against it is precisely in the same category as argument against the law of gravity. Perhaps our world would be a more amusing world if there were no law of gravity; perhaps it would be a better world if all negotiations were carried out in the market place. The simple answer is that if you act on the assumption that there is no law of gravity or that all political life can be carried out in the full glare of publicity, you do so at very definite peril both to yourself and to the entire community.

The trouble is that we tend to view secrecy as something bad in itself. Secrecy is bad only when it is used as a means to hide and protect dishonesty, as a means to withhold the facts necessary for making necessary judgments, as a means to commit people to a line of action of which they are ignorant. These abuses of secrecy are most inviting, because they are so simple and because they are such handy tools for power. Hence it is right and proper for men generally to be suspicious of secrecy. But if this suspicion is carried too far, if the proper function of secrecy is forgotten, then it becomes impossible for society to function, and government turns into a fruitless exercise of debate and rhetoric which will end in disgust and lead directly to the inauguration of a new régime, in which the very abuses of secrecy themselves flower forth in all their fetid fulness.

The infinitely difficult task of the press in a complex yet free society is to defeat any attempt at abusing secrecy while at the same time to protect the legitimate function of secrecy as a means for ironing out difficulties and arriving at policies and agreements without which that society could not continue to function. Hence the newspaperman is torn between his duty to make public that which the public should know and his duty to keep confidences when such confidences deserve to be kept. Unhappily it is almost impossible to weigh all the factors regarding confidential information every time a reporter obtains information so labeled. Is the politician who is telling you something "off the record" up to some skulduggery and trying to tie your hands by telling you something in confidence, or is he genuinely concerned with giving you the background of what is properly a secret matter so that you will not, through ignorance, misinform your readers? Obviously it is impossible to settle this question afresh each time it arises.

Therefore a general, rule-of-thumb code has arisen in journalistic circles which operates approximately as follows: if a newspaperman asks for information and is told that he cannot have it except in confidence, he is free to refuse to accept it in confidence, or he is free to accept it but then is bound not to divulge what he has been told without specific authorization from his source. If he refuses the information, he is of course free to seek it elsewhere, and if he obtains it elsewhere without any question of confidence being involved, he is free to print it. This system does not work perfectly.

Conceivably a situation may arise where the journalist's paramount duty to the public will force him into a breach of this code, but such a breach is only excusable if the most compelling and serious reasons demand it. No responsible journalist would ever so break the code without consultation not only with his own conscience but also with those of his colleagues whom he know to be themselves responsible and conscientious men. For a breach of this kind, especially if it should prove unjustified, injures seriously our whole system of press and freedom and

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society. If it is often repeated, the result is bound to be the emergence of those very abuses of secrecy against which it is so important a function of our press to guard us.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

From San Francisco

SOMEBODY in the crowd said he is twisting her wrist but the policeman was not twisting her wrist, it was the girl who was trying to get free and no matter how she turned and twisted the policeman held her wrist and sometimes she would get herself in a bad position and then there would be a pause until it did not hurt any longer and then she would start struggling again and all the time she kept screaming at the Navy Lieutenant it is because I would not go upstairs with swine like you that they are running me in. The policeman was not listening to what she said but the Lieutenant was listening; the Lieutenant was very conscious of the crowd that was listening also and that is why he had to make faces and laugh to show the crowd that what the girl said was very absurd. I suppose he was Intelligence or something or Shore Patrol. I do not know what it was all about. The Italian in the liquor store said there is all this trouble everywhere in the world so why do we have to have this trouble, this most unnecessary trouble? This stupid trouble on the street corner?

In San Francisco it is not just the delegates and the newspapermen working and looking and talking, with the official cars waiting outside the Opera House and the hotels; it is also the city with the banks functioning as usual, the hospitals, the night clubs, the restaurants working, the police working as usual; it is also that there are cemeteries for the civilians if you know where to look for them and if you have a reason to visit them; it is also that the Conference is working in a city with all the usual complications that are in a city; it is also that it is not working in a closed city. In most cities you see the streets and unless you are playing detective you do not try to find out anything about the people who are in the streets. So that in most cities if you were a Conference you could be conferring all the time without being distracted by anything beyond the city; the speeches, the memoranda, the discussions in committee would stay within the city undisturbed by anything outside the city, measured against no mountain, no sea. That is the way it would be in Paris or London or in New York—unless you went out of your way. But it is not how it is in San Francisco.

From any of the high hills in San Francisco—main streets lead to them so that it is not an excursion to be on top of them—you see sunlight on the hills across the bay, the ships entering or leaving harbor, you see the water and the hills, the sky the sunlight and the clouds, so that if you are in a city it is just as if you were not in a city; the words you speak are lost because there is so much space—the space, the extent of the world—which they cannot fill.

If these delegates to the Conference had not come from all over the world there still would be in San Francisco a feeling that the city was not the world, not closed to the world, but exposed to the oceans and the continents, with the wind driving from Asia, the mist driven in from the sea, the sunlight over the ocean, over the American continent, over all the continents. There would be the feeling that whatever was planned and debated here was a small gesture out of scale with the world.

Perhaps that is why the delegates have felt such a need to identify their countries, to bring their countries with them to the Conference. That is what is behind all the talk about the small nations. Each delegate has brought an image of his nation in his heart. Because otherwise he would feel too alone. Too small and too lost. The plan is for the world, but each delegate in order that his voice may find some strength, carries his country in his heart, the name of his country, the fields, the factories, the language of his country and its defined borders, the road leading from a definite city across a river which has a name, through the village, past the church just as you make the turn into the main street—which has a name—and then the road winds up a hill and you do not see the valley on the other side but you know its name also and you know why you are on the road and where you are going.

★

The senator from a South American country sat at dinner in the restaurant with Americans, French, Italians. He too had brought his country with him. If you would only realize that I have a country, he said, if it were only possible for you to know my country and all the other countries of South America. If we only were made to feel that Americans knew that we had countries and that we felt about them as Americans feel about America. If only you would not talk about *hispanidad* as if it were a disease and I know what you mean and it may sound like the plague but if you could forget the name and forget all about Spain there is still something in our countries—different in each of our countries—and it may have come from Spain, remotely or less remotely, but the heat over our plains has also much to do with it, our mountains and the Atlantic or the Pacific have something to do with it, the Indians and the dark race have something to do with it. If only you could know our cities and the way the language varies from city to city, from province to province; the local customs and why should they not be to us as your customs are to you? You speak of us—when you are informed—always in theoretical terms: the Church has done this or that; the politicos do this or that; the capitalists, the ranch owners. . . . I wish you could see how the child plays with the toys we have for children—they are simpler than your toys—and then the child learns to read and write, the child makes the sign of the cross in the way that seems so extraordinary to you, the triple sign of the cross with the hand moving so swiftly; the child is no longer a child, the young lady goes to her first dance, the young lady is affianced, there is the ceremonial of courtship . . . if you knew her name, her voice from other voices, the way she walks from the way any other girl has ever walked, if you knew then her troubles with the servants

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which are not quite like the troubles any other girl has ever had with servants anywhere; if you know how she will grow old, or perhaps she will die young, and where she is buried; if you knew that grave which is different from any other grave in the world. If you knew all the graves which are each one distinct. Here the grave will be three yards from the tree and when you stand at the grave looking beyond the tree there will be a white mark on the face of the mountain. In all the world there will not be a grave precisely three yards from a tree with a white mark on a mountain. If only we could feel that sometime some nation will know any other nation as one man knows another man. But everything is always on paper; no one looks directly; everyone stands alone.

A very beautiful American girl stood up from her table and came to our table. She stood at the head of our table, alone; she stood very straight; she was very determined and drunk; she was very beautifully dressed, very expensively dressed, and she was very beautiful. She said ladies and gentlemen I want to make a speech. Then she stood there, silent and erect. The Senator from the South American country looked at her and looked at us. I said to the Senator this is one of our girls not one of yours; she is a very beautiful American girl; she means no harm at all; this is one of our customs at Conferences; in the evening, after the Conference has ended its work for the day. The girl said ladies and gentlemen as a representative of the Junior Chamber of Commerce I want to say that we are here because we want to have the streets cleaned, the department of street cleaning needs all our encouragement and our support.

The girl sat down at our table. She looked at the senator; she surveyed the French journalist, the Italian journalist; she looked at Mrs. Anne O'Hare McCormick. Then she said I think your party is very boring.

★

It is because all these countries in the world are separate and worried about their separate position that all that takes place in San Francisco is separate also from the countries of the world. The delegates have brought their countries in their minds and in their hearts with them to San Francisco, but that is only an image, a memory, an unrest, an anxiety, a hunger, a destitution that they have brought. They have not brought their countries with them; you cannot carry a country with you on a journey; they have not brought the will of their countries with them; they are delegates but they do not have plenipotentiary powers; even if they are the foreign ministers. Mr. Stalin is in Moscow; the Russian armies are where everyone knows they are. So that a Czechoslovak or a Pole—but there is no Pole; but even if there were a Pole—could bring the image of his country with him but he could not bring the power of his country with him, or the will of his country, because the Russian armies are where they are and Mr. Stalin is in Moscow. There is no ocupying army in France but France is occupied by incessant anxiety, France is occupied with making up her mind; France is in a new Europe where nobody knows anything but distress and anxiety. So that M. Bidault can speak for France, but formally at best, because France is not prepared to know what to say.

The decision as to what to say, what to desire, is being made in every nation, but in the heart of the nation. The decision is not easy for any nation and it is particularly difficult for those nations to take which have not a dictator. Only the simplest decisions, the simplest desires have been defined; the simplest instructions given to the delegates. The delegates are certain only of a few elementary desires; certain only that they express the desires of their governments and peoples when they ask for a few elementary results from the Conference they are attending. They ask that there be no more wars; they ask for peace; they ask for rest; they ask for food; they ask for a system by which it will be possible for people to eat and rest and be at peace. And then because they feel so lost and so tired they complicate these simple requests by asking also for some certainty that their nation will remain their nation, that their national pride will also be secured, that their national ambitions also will not be denied. That complicates everything. They want bilateral pacts of security; they want regional pacts, they want the protection of a world system, but they also want whatever immediate protection they have been able to invent. That complicates everything.

The great achievement of the Conference is at the same time its failure. The conference seems to have decided not to close the doors to proposals of amendment. Dumbarton Oaks had not provided a rigid plan. The plan for peace, the system for peace must be formed slowly, gradually, with debate and consent. There is always a Conference at the end of every war. But this war is not like the other wars; this war has destroyed more than the other wars destroyed. The Conference after the other wars had countries to work with; some of them were defeated countries; the others were victorious countries. The decisions to take were about boundaries and reparations, rewards and punishments—for countries, for existing countries—and of course also you could plan some system about preserving peace. But this Conference, although the names of the countries are still there, has to deal with a world anxiety, the exhaustion of a world, to such an extent that the names of the countries no longer represent anything isolated, anything definite. So that this Conference cannot invent a rigid plan. It would have liked to invent and impose a formula; its failure to do so is its achievement.

★

In a few hours Bob Considine of INS and I will be on the ferry, crossing to Oakland. We will go past Treasure Island and that was the World's Fair in peace time with the pavillions and the flags. Now it is all camouflaged; it is something secret and military. Then we will be on the "City of San Francisco," the streamliner which "sails"—so the timetable says—for Chicago. During the night we will cross the desert. In this world hope would be like the camp fires in the desert with the indifferent stars above and the night.

C. G. PAULDING.

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"The Resistance"

The third of
three articles

Emmanuel Mounier

WHEN, as early as the summer of 1940, there were born the first French Resistance groups, they in no way set themselves the task of rebuilding the structures of French life, or even of driving out the invader, but rather, at the most, of erecting bulwarks for French valor and the French soul against the nazi virus.

As these groups gradually grew in size, they gathered together, in a single, common undertaking, two types of adherents differing considerably from each other. Some were moved only by patriotic feeling, without ulterior purpose. They joined up solely to drive out the Germans. They conceived no link between their activity devoted to this job and their hopes for what might happen after the war. Others more or less consciously felt that in weaving the fabric of resistance, they were reweaving the fabric of France and were assuming responsibilities for the future. To the extent that deliverance drew nigh, they were led, in order to avoid the anarchy which might have followed the fall of Vichy, to organize their assumption of administrative power, of the press, of public order. A natural pressure pushed guerrilla movements toward becoming political movements.

Yet these movements had built themselves up through chance meetings, and their boundaries in no sense coincided with those of former political groups. At the very most you might have seen in them some slight trace of affinity to such traditional party distinctions. Thus the "Libération" movement included a rather heavier proportion of partisans of the Left; "Franc-Tireur" had many socialist and labor union members; "Défense de la France" and "Combat" had less of a working class aspect, as was likewise the case with the "OCM" ("Organization Civile et Militaire"). As a matter of fact, men of the Right and men of the Left were pretty well mixed together everywhere. This was a source of strength. And thus there was created, through these contacts in the common labor and the common danger, a sturdy brotherhood which all equally swore, last September, that they would never compromise. But this was likewise a source of weakness. In order not to endanger that dearly purchased unity of action and of patriotism, in order to avoid resurrecting the old politicians' squabbles, men drew back from all forms of political thinking. Thus were maintained misunderstandings and over-facile agreement as well as unity, and there was serious risk that when the negative purpose of the whole movement—the liberation of French soil—had been attained, the Resistance Movement would find itself somewhat hollow and baffled.

It is these mixtures of heterogeneous elements which make it so difficult for a foreigner, and even sometimes for a Frenchman, to understand our new political geography. I shall try to clarify it somewhat.

★

In 1942 the negotiations entered into by the numerous smaller groups and the few large resistance movements, all sprung up spontaneously throughout the country, ended in the fusion of all in a vast federation wherein each preserved certain marks of independence: the "Mouvement Uni de Résistance" ("MUR"). At about the same time, under communist auspices, the "Front National" was founded, in which, side by side with notorious communists, were present members of religious communities, writers without party affiliations (François Mauriac), and scholars (Langevin, Jolliot-Curie).

At the time of liberation these two groupings continued, the first merely changing its name to "Mouvement de Libération Nationale" ("MLN"). Since "resistance" was over, even though the word continued more and more to be used, these groupings automatically took on a political coloration. Not long ago the OCM and "Libération Zone Nord," both of which had been omitted from these major groupings, fused in a "Union Travailliste," numerically far less important, but appealing to all elements which seek to formulate a new socialism.

The lack of fixed principle which had been the rule in recruiting these heterogeneous groupings was to give full rein to uncertainty regarding the direction in which they would move politically. They themselves drifted for a certain number of weeks, preoccupied with the immediate work of organizing for the great day. Moreover they had to adjust themselves to those who joined at the last minute, and whose coming one could not cer-

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tainly attribute to any one of the various possible motives: jumping on the band wagon, saving their skins, misunderstandings or political trickery. This uncertainty still continues, but the main lines of each man's action are becoming more apparent.

The "Front National" retained its reputation of being communist-inspired. All those who are distrustful of communism avoid adhering to it. Yet exception must be made—and for this the Front has been much criticized—of certain Rightist elements compromised by collaboration, who thought it wiser to dip themselves in the brightest dye at hand. Yet you would be very much mistaken were you to imagine that this is a sort of combat team, after the fashion of the old Front Populaire. From the very outset, and even more since the recent very moderate speech of Maurice Thorez, the tone of this movement is unanimously French and tends to hush up all really burning problems. Its recent congress was a love feast of applause, and heard a tongue-lashing of all revolutionaries who by their demands threaten to disturb this serene calm. Some people, without a past history and without political prejudices, entered the Front in order to get in contact—or at least so they hoped—with the revolutionary masses. But they did not meet the masses, which remain the property of the Communist Party, and now they are even deprived of any revolutionary program. Indeed what we have here, at least for the moment, is rather a regiment at ease, which seems utterly removed from motion despite its numerous special committees. Its newspaper press is unhappy about this, but to little effect. But that it should be the only group enjoying the expressed confidence of the communists remains for many an essential reason for continued loyalty. They hope that here may some day be found the keystone of a broader and more dynamic body.

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The MLN is even less homogeneous. At its recent national congress, however, which proved to be the great political event of last winter, it succeeded in maintaining unity. There were there revealed, moreover, two main lines of tendency. One of these—the minority, but a strong minority of 40 percent, far more homogenous and single-minded than the majority—unsuccessfully advocated fusion with the Front National. This group was led by the young editor of the weekly paper, *Action,* Pierre Hervé. Formerly chief of the Communist Youth, Hervé left the Party, but unlike many who have changed their allegiance, he insists upon collaboration with the Party, upon fusion in common action. Whatever one may think of his attitude, his paper has the advantage of being one of the rare publications which frankly confront problems and seek to formulate a line of political thought. Yet the majority of the MLN voted against any fusion with the "Front" in a kind of huge popular front. Apart from this negative position, its will would have remained rather confused had it not been for the sensational appearance of the writer André Malraux, who came on a brief leave from the front, where he was serving as a colonel; his presence succeeded in knitting together the majority's scattered forces. Malraux, whom those who are ill informed still look upon as a communist, seems to move further away from the Communist Party precisely to the extent that the latter takes on the coloration of a governmental party and, for the time being at least, a conservative party. His longing for the dramatic finds no nourishment in so tame a phenomenon. In this instance he opposed fusion, and proposed that the MLN in its own right make use of the methods which have led to the success of the Communist Party: one well-chosen objective at a time, rigorously pursued, in a direct struggle calculated to forge the militant spirit. He even indicated the first objective: the nationalization of credit. In the end he carried the majority with him. But the internal stresses in the MLN were not thereby relieved. The minority is strong; it is possessed of men whose wills are more firmly shaped and who are better trained politically than is the majority. The majority is overflowing with men of good intention, but their intention is still confused and hesitant. The revolutionary language spoken in these circles is sincere and stripped of all demagogy, yet it is difficult to see what link there is with the real masses of the people.

True enough, this majority—at least that part of it which is active—has an idea at the back of its head. In many quarters, ever since liberation, there has been made manifest the idea of a new socialism, which would seek to join to the revolutionary enthusiasm of the old a youthful dynamism which the latter has lost, as well as a desire to forestall the tyranny which we have all seen develop among partisans of collectivization. Mauriac himself, in the *Figaro,* shortly after the retaking of Paris, described himself as a socialist. Very soon three phrases began to be heard on all lips: "humanist socialism," "liberal socialism," "laborism." As this movement of ideas gained impetus—ideas grafted upon the investigations undertaken before the war by such youthful movements as *Esprit, Ordre Nouveau,* etc.—an opposition grew up. Nor was this opposition without justification. *Action,* for instance, reproached this neo-socialism with being a "socialism without socialists." Indeed it is hard to imagine what a socialism would be if it were not provided with any strong popular following. And it must certainly be acknowledged that the people still belong to the Socialist and above all to the Communist Parties. It must be acknowledged that "laborist" ideas, for the moment, are being born

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outside of the people and run the risk of recruiting only isolated intellectuals and members of the lower middle class moved by fear of communism, men who may well warp their original direction. It is pointed out, and not without reason, that fascisms on the de Man and Déat pattern, socialist ideas grafted on a lower-middle-class root, have always led to disaster. The problem, then, would seem to be to give new life to socialism both in its inspiration and in its rhetoric, but in intimate relationship with the masses of the people which constitute its sole historic strength. Will the masses be willing?

The Socialist Party cannot help feeling the loss of adherents which it has suffered in the most alive strata of the country. It can accept the dead legacy of the old Left, which is ready to its hand: this would merely be a peaceful retreat into the storerooms of history, a retreat perhaps subsidized by a few electoral victories, but a retreat leading to death. This problem seems to disturb certain members of the Party. It is therefore not hostile to negotiations with new movements and it even seeks to propagandize within the MLN.

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The most acute problem nonetheless is to be found in connection with the Communist Party, or, to be more precise, with the communist forces. For you may disagree with the doctrines and tactics of this party while still recognizing that it has won the active leadership of the French working class, which amounts to saying, in the industrial era we are about to enter, the power to gain command in the near future. Now until the war, the Communist Party had kept itself locked up in a dogmatic and sour isolation. Will it cease so to act? Within a few days of my writing these paragraphs, Maurice Thorez, the most respected of the communist leaders, spoke as follows: "The resurrection of France is not the task of a single political party or of a handful of statesmen. It is the task of millions of French men and women. It is the task of the whole nation. We point to the necessity of sealing the union of all French forces, at all costs: the union sealed with the seal of our martyrs, be they communist or Catholic, socialist, democrat, or republican of every political shading."

Then he added: "We shall have to experience and deal with new factors, new information. The marxist theory, dialectical materialism, is not a dogma but a guide for action. Its theses and its conclusions manifestly change with the passage of time: it is manifestly replaced by new conclusions and new theses suited to new historic conditions."

Mere maneuvering, some say, especially those who distrust the over-pliable changes made possible by the "dialectic" spirit. But even maneuvers leave their mark upon minds and hearts. It is possible that some day, out of all these attempts at assimilation, there will be born a broad French unity, centered upon bold and renovating action.

But let no one ask France for anything too quickly. She is only at the break of dawn. She must become accustomed to the daylight. She must rebuild all her powers, so sadly scattered during the last four years. And let no one forget that she must also create for herself anew the physical strength she needs, must shape for herself a new class capable of guiding her destinies—something she had no leisure to do while she carried on the struggle of war—must rebuild her cities, her railroads, her harbor facilities. And let her friends watch carefully, during these days, the youthful forces seeking to work out their destiny throughout the breadth of France. They have not yet given up all hope of being among the bold leaders of the nations.

Education for Freedom, Inc.

LEO CAMP

THE GREAT shagheads of pragmatism have a habit of falling into a terrific temper whenever the liberal arts or the "great books" are mentioned. Unlike those who have been down to Annapolis, they are continually discovering the most sinister medievalist tendencies in St. John's College. The worst scandal occurred when Education for Freedom, an organization friendly to St. John's, put on a few broadcasts the winter before last in an attempt to explain the liberal arts to the general public. This interruption in the steady flow of progressivist propaganda was interpreted as a kind of threat to take over the schools. Mr. Sidney Hook poured his adrenalin into several journals simultaneously and a conference was summoned to combat the program of the "authoritarians."

Polemic conducted in such a mood makes one wonder what has so frightened the pragmatists. The chief danger they find, of course, is the reading of definitive books. It is not the dogmas of these books, but rather the fact that they can only be dealt with by rational analysis and argument that really alarms Mr. Dewey and his followers. For pragmatism itself rests on a dogma, that of the absolute primacy of experimental science, and if this be submitted to discussion, it will become a problem like any other. At bottom, then, the pragmatists and the liberal artists differ, at least implicitly, in their conception of the nature of science. The latter think that discourse upon definitions and principles also leads to truth and to clarification. But this is to state the opposition between the two groups much too simply. For

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the Education For Freedom people are actually agreed only on the failure of the progressive schools and on the practical value of the liberal arts. They are, in fact, united against the pragmatists largely on pragmatic grounds.

The ambiguity of this quarrel can be brought out rather clearly in a different way in the case of St. John's. St. John's, contrary to the popular view, did not start out with a definite philosophy. It assumed nothing but the rationality of the human mind and the utility of knowing some of its highest achievements in the past. It started with a problem. That problem was not how to recover the treasures of Greece and the Middle Ages; it was rather to develop a mind adequate to the full range of scientific and speculative problems of the present day. Such a program hoped to produce a critique of scientific thought by cultivating the relevant disciplines of the mind, beginning with the first, which is the use of words and symbols.

The contradiction in this, however, was that the liberal arts can only be fully defined as ordered to their end which is science and wisdom. Not knowing to what science the arts were to be ordered (since it was precisely the arts which were to produce this) St. John's necessarily fell into dialectics, that is to say, the habit of reasoning on merely probable premises. St. John's is in fact far closer to Bertrand Russell than to Aristotle. The result has been a race of dialecticians who tend to think of all science as tentative and uncertain. Orientation of the curriculum to problems on the frontiers of speculation ignores the fact that such problems can only be solved by means of what is demonstratively certain or at least highly probable. It also ignores the fact that only what is already definitely established as true can give the young man stable intellectual habits and insights. The confusion of the undergraduate college with the philosopher's guild is dangerous because intellectual habit is not merely a skill like rhetoric or dialectics; it is also a grasp of something intelligible. All this is to say that in a well-conceived liberal arts program the whole order of terms and problems must be, in essentials, foreknown by the teacher in view of the science finally to be achieved. Dialectics can be preparatory, but it becomes an end in itself only if no definite science is known to which the arts can be ordered.

By this I do not mean to condemn St. John's. St. John's has the function of clarification and general enlightenment even without attaining the perfection of rigorous discipline. Because of this it may be that St. John's will ultimately have its greatest impact on American life in the field of adult education. It has also the merit of having awakened us from our lethargy by showing the importance of the liberal arts and the gravity of the problem of knowledge in our time. St. John's indeed merely manifests in an acute fashion the fact that no one today has a philosophy of science equal to its object at all levels. Catholic schools, despite their adherence to Saint Thomas, are not a whit better off except as to moral doctrine. The mathematical and experimental sciences run off in all directions in Catholic schools as much as in secular. How to order a liberal arts program to such a state of confusion is a totally unsolved problem. We have nothing to boast of by comparison to St. John's, and in some respects less.

We must nevertheless draw a lesson from the frustrations which St. John's is now suffering. They arise from an internal and logical contradiction, not from some failure of good will or intelligence. The St. John's solution is unacceptable in the last analysis for the same reason as Mr. Dewey's. To make dialectics the primary discipline is to define implicitly a philosophy in which there can be no certainty and no clarity except in the exploration of alternate universes of discourse; this is only a more subtle and effective way of denying metaphysics and theology. I have defended St. John's in the past because I saw that nothing could be done until the liberal arts were recovered in their integrity. Current efforts to patch up existing programs are usually worse because they do not sufficiently recognize this. Nevertheless I now see that not only the use, but the very character of the liberal arts at St. John's has been radically affected by the conception of science held there. The liberal arts themselves, I now see, cannot be recovered until we have achieved an adequate philosophy of science, that positive basis of agreement which is so lamentably lacking in Education For Freedom.

Some people look upon all this as primarily a moral problem, to be solved by the renewal of the Christian spirit. While the moral problem certainly exists, it does not explain the structural difficulties of the school. It does not explain why we have such difficulty in selecting among a plethora of subject matters. The proof that the problem is in this aspect primarily intellectual is that it is soluble intellectually. For instance, we do not need to study every argument that comes along in order to learn logic, because we can state the principles of logic formally and in abstraction. If we could do the same with the natural sciences —the center of all our troubles—we could prepare adequately for specialization without sacrificing the other liberal arts to the necessity of loading the future scientist with a vast store of inchoate information.

St. John's has, despite all difficulties, gone a long way toward doing this. It has seen that the intelligible principles and methods of science are more important than mere erudition and it has done much to discover what the rationale of the mathematical-physical sciences actually is. It has

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failed of final achievement, in my opinion, because it has not realized the importance of Aristotle's distinction between demonstration and dialectics. Most modern science in fact rests on hypotheses or logical constructions and is therefore dialectical in mode. If formalities of this kind could be isolated and defined, then the tyranny of content could be ended; the matter of the sciences would become merely illustration, exercise and inductive foundation. But the metaphysician cannot regulate the lower sciences in this way until he himself posseses those sciences. This seems to me the problem and the most likely way of solving it. If such a program were actually achieved, then Education For Freedom would really become a menace to the pragmatists, which, despite the public and continuous shuddering of the latter, is not the case at present.

Communications

PROGRESS THROUGH TRADITION

Philadelphia, Pa.

TO the Editors: May I add a postscript to Anna Hellersberg-Wendriner's article, "Progress Through Tradition"? (THE COMMONWEAL, April 6, 1945.) When I "for the last time followed Mother Grace Dammann in the flesh," it marked the earthly end of a friendship begun in about the third grade, continuing through college and reaching—what I did not then realize, of course—a culmination the day before her death.

I advisedly say "earthly end of a friendship" because Mother Dammann, her personality, her principles, have become so much a part of my own life that the friendship will continue beyond both our deaths. And Mother Dammann alone knows how much her support and—yes—her defense has meant and will mean to me, both as a student and an alumna of Manhattanville.

I know I express the sentiments of all her students when I offer my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to Anna Hellersberg-Wendriner and THE COMMONWEAL for this tribute.

ANNA BEATRICE MURPHY.

The Stage & Screen

Slice It Thin

A YOUNG and amiable small musical presented by the Blackfriars' Guild as last on their list for the season. The book, product of Lieutenant E. N. Heghinian, USNR, and Al Moritz, concerns a Hollywood movie star (male) caught in a jumble of talented kids in a small college town and the business comes out pleasantly farcical and trimly directed by Dennis Gurney. The music, played on a single piano by Bill Stone—a process which on occasion, I think, can be twice as stimulating as the ordinary multiple brass—struck me as somewhat old-hat, and the title lyric certainly an awkward one. Otherwise, a creditable performance. (*At the Blackfriars' Theater.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

The Stuff of Heroes

TWO RECENT arrivals from England are gracing our screens. Neither of these are new, as far as their production dates in England are concerned, and neither are really timely, but both are worthy of your consideration and both serve forcefully to remind us (in terms more convincing but less flamboyant than Hollywood's) of the valiant fight put up by other members of the United Nations.

I don't know why Twentieth Century-Fox, who are releasing *"The Way Ahead,"* found it necessary to attach a foreword for American audiences. Perhaps they thought, because of the picture's fine, quiet understatement, that we'd miss the point. However, even without Quentin Reynolds's uncinematic lecture (about this war's minute men, the kind of men democracy provided and will continue to produce, men who will forever guard the way ahead, etc., etc.) the film speaks quite eloquently for itself. Director Carol Reed, scriptwriters Eric Ambler and Peter Ustinov, and the splendid cast led by David Niven with a group of lesser known English actors, mostly male, have seen to that very well. They treat a theme that has been handled by American films many times but seldom with such simplicity and absence of glamor and ostentation. First we are shown quick scenes of the men in civilian life: cross-section stuff: an engineer in a public building, a travel clerk, a garage attendant, a rent collector. Then they are drafted or join up, they and the clerk in the department store and his floor manager, the farmer and the rich man's son. We see them on their way to camp, their first days in uniform, their hard-boiled sergeant, their griping, training, conditioning — in brief, the making of soldiers. Director Reed develops his theme slowly with excellent touches of characterization, with bits of humor and pathos, with snatches of conversation and many shots of vigorous training and hard work (including the English equivalent of KP). He tells the story of these eight men, without emphasis on any one, so that the film is like a documentary. The change in the men is so gradual that it is quite realistic. By the time we are shown the men on their first furloughs, we are as convinced as they of their regard for their officers, their *esprit de corps* and their proficiency as soldiers. The unassuming first half of the film makes its exciting episodes that follow all the more thrilling. The fire on the transport is as nerve-wracking to watch as any such scene that I've seen in the movies. It is magnificently directed, and even its conclusion, with the rescue of the men from the burning ship, has an understated tone of bravery that makes you want to cheer. In the final scenes the men prove themselves through their fighting in North Africa. "The Way Ahead," without going into excessive ecstacies and without the condescending tone that prevailed in Noel Coward's "In Which We Serve," pays well-earned tribute to the English fighter in the ranks.

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"The Silver Fleet," distributed in this country by Producers Releasing Corporation, also tells a story with which we are familiar through Hollywood films. Its scene is occupied Holland and its theme is the resistance and sabotage of the Dutch in a shipyard that is forced to turn out submarines for the nazis. This is a plot that might have made just another conventional B thriller at the end of our long cycle of occupied-country movies. But through the writing and direction of Vernon Sewell and Gordon Wellesley, and through the good acting of its English cast, this melodrama becomes a stirring tribute to the stalwart Dutch. Much of the film's power is due to that extraordinarily sincere actor, Ralph Richardson, in the lead rôle. As the owner of the shipyard who is given four hours in which to make up his mind to collaborate, and then as the secret leader of the sabotage movement, Richardson plays his difficult part with suave understanding and in a heroic mold without a touch of ham. Unable to tell his wife (Googie Winters) and fellow-townsmen, who resent his apparent quisling actions, of his plans to prevent the nazis from getting the finished submarine, the man leaves a diary which explains his deeds. A lengthy flashback reveals the exciting episodes that make up this one chapter in the complete story of courage. The final notation in the diary is typical of the film's message: "Life and death are only an end and a beginning. A nation will live as long as it has people ready to die."

I understand the half-hour documentary film made by the U.S. War Department, *"The Battle of San Pietro,"* is soon to be released; and I hope the shift in interest in our fighting front since V-E Day will not make the powers who decide these things change their minds. Written and directed by John Huston, "San Pietro" is a first-rate example of a battle film and it shows again the power of the motion picture camera in informing us what war is really like. Furthermore "San Pietro" is the only documentary film on the Italian campaign. It uses maps, excellent scenes of the difficult terrain in the Liri Valley, an explanatory narrative, wonderful sequences of our foot-soldiers slowly advancing in groves of gnarled olive trees, shots of men and tanks going into the town, to tell its story of bravery and death and life. Even more awe-inspiring than the scenes of Italians digging graves for our men are the closing shots of the Italian people returning to San Pietro after the battle. And most unforgettable of these are the faces of the frightened children as they advance toward the camera. The closing scenes of this short film are a masterpiece of cinematography that no one should miss.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Auden's Odyssey

ANNE FREMANTLE

FOR A poet to publish a volume of collected verse marks as definite a stage in his career as when an artist has his first one-man show. "The man has arrived," say the critics; "we have now an established reputation with which to deal." Whatever history has in store for him, the poet is safe for the present; he is a counter in contemporary values. A civilized citizen can no longer afford to acknowledge ignorance of at least his name and nature "Auden, why, yes, of course, that poet fellow. Of course I know whom you mean." The poet himself, it must be imagined, regards such omnibus publication as much in the nature of a routine check-up. He feels fine, he considers his genius good for another thirty, or forty, maybe, years of sound flight, but since we're all supposed to be cancer-conscious these days, since the whole world is suffering from shortages, of genius as well as of paper and gas, perhaps it's just as well to have the Common Reader, or his devoted admirers, or both, give him the once-over. The poet can indeed trust *them* to tell him of his vitamin deficiencies, his caloric values, his prospects, literary and financial, and his potential—as they see them.

But Mr. Auden has played an enchanting trick upon his public; whether inspired by deep humility or sheer impishness, or both.* He has arranged his poems in sequence, alphabetically by first lines. So that all possible pomposity is withdrawn, as it were a sting, from both the poet's purpose and the reader's reaction. There can be no tracing the development of Mr. Auden's philosophy, from *"A*bout suffering they were never wrong," through *Abru*ptly mounting her ramshackle wheel" to *"Y*oung men late in the night." Even the songs move from *"As* I walked out one evening" to *"What's* in your mind, my dove, my coney" rather than from communism to Christianity. Only in the two final long poems (published separately last fall in a slim volume called "For the Time Being" and sold out almost immediately after publication) is the full extent of the journey that has brought him from Oxford *via* Iceland apparent. Mr. Auden has a long, and excellent poem to Sigmund Freud, in which he explains

> . . . he wishes us more than this: to be free
> Is often to be lonely; he would unite
> The unequal moieties fractured
> By our well-meaning sense of justice

But his whole collected works might be dedicated to Mr. Einstein. For "The Composer" "Always in trouble" and "In sickness and in health" cannot possibly be immediately approximate "The Journey to Iceland" or "The Labyrinth" in creation, though they do in their present position. It is certainly an agreeable and amusing exercise to disrupt Mr. Auden's disarmingly simple alphabetical arrangement, and revamp his poems, partly from memory of past *New Yorkers* and past *New Writings,* part from guessing which owl preceded which egg. Mr. Auden's own explanation, made in the most self-effacing of prefaces, is that of his ten previously published books, the present volume contains "the pieces he has nothing against except their lack of importance" and "the poems for which he is honestly grateful" (it does not, of course contain the plays).

In English literature classes, poets are labeled much

* The Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden. Random. $3.75.

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as painters were: Tennyson is the Master of Onomatopoieia, as, say, a certain primitive was Master of the Death of the Virgin. W. H. Auden, it is fairly safe betting, will rank for the English-speaking school child as Master of the Juxta-posed Image, or perhaps of the Unexpected Shock. From his first page to his last, it is his most salient immediate quality.

> . . . and the torturer's horse
> Scratches its innocent behind on a tree (*first page*)
> . . . When the Spirit must practice his scales of rejoicing (*last page*)

Sometimes he rides this habit to the edge of absurdity:

> Nude as a number all night I ran

or

> Here war is simple like a monument
> A telephone is speaking to a man

But always he compels the sleepy memory, forces the sluggard attention of the reader:

> Far off like floating seeds the ships
> Diverge on urgent voluntary errands
>
> Outside his landscape he could see
> gentle landscape terrified of grammar
>
> The scarves, consoles and fauteuils of the mind
> May be composed into a picture still
>
> O dear white children casual as birds
> Playing among the ruined languages
>
> Domestic hatred can become
> A habit-forming drug.

Another characteristic of Mr. Auden's is that, although he can be grimly satirical—whether he uses the American Ballad form (he admits handsomely the indebtedness of "Miss Gee" and "Victor" to "Frankie and Johnny") or uses rhymed couplets as in "Such nice people' or "Gare du Midi"—yet he never makes the mistake of intruding satire into lyrics. There is satire in "Heavy Date" but none in "O lurcher loving collier"; a little in "As I walked out one evening" but none in "Lay your sleeping head, my love" or in *Canzone,* or in the whole tremendous *Recitative* in "For the Time Being."

The poet as philosopher, the poet as mystic, is almost inevitably impaled on the horns of a dilemma. Or he finds his verse breaks down under the weight of his thought (or experience) and thus ceases to be an adequate vehicle for expressing either, in which case he becomes incoherent, like Coleridge or Blake; or he abandons the top-heavy thought and just sings—as Verlaine or Gerard Hopkins. Sometimes, when the verse fails, it becomes pontifical prose, as in Browning or Matthew Arnold; gusty frenzy (as in Blake's "Prophetic Books"). "In any case, it is only the purest lyric gift that can carry truth other than its own, that is to say, philosophical, or mystical truth. John Donne and Emily Brontë, Rainier Maria Rilke and Garcia Lorca, Emily Dickinson and Rimbaud succeed where Walt Whitman, George Eliot, Victor Hugo and numberless others signally fail. Sometimes even the attempt destroys the poet completely, as Coventry Patmore or Humbert Wolfe who, like little wanton boys, sailed far beyond their depths, until the bladders burst. Even great genius sometimes st. mbles—who does not prefer "Comus" to "Paradise Regained"? But the greatest giants of all sing as they think, and think as they sing—Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe are triumphant evidences that it can be done.

There was a time when it seemed almost as though Mr. Auden were a casualty; his "New Year Letter" and the "Commentary," included here, are *ni vers ni prose.* Another unlucky throw of the dice, and Mr. Auden would have landed in Granchester, or have been obliged to move back twenty decades to the Rape of the Lock. But then, quite suddenly, but surely, he is saved. In "The Sea and the Mirror" he already has elaborated a compromise, by keeping his verse and his prose absolutely apart when he does not feel sure he can make his mind plain without endangering his voice, then he turns Caliban on to speak prose to the audience. In "Depravity (A Sermon)" and in the meditation of Simeon and in Herod's soliloquy, he bravely makes prose carry the complexities which might strain his verse. But he has not forgotten that prose at its best stumbles and stammers its way along, and only poetry can fly and sing; in love, as at the manger, M. Jourdain is never enough—as even the author of the "Summa" found.

Mr. Auden's verses on other poets are extraordinarily good literary criticism, as well as understanding tributes. Voltaire at Ferney, who had

> . . . led the other children in a holy war
> Against the infamous grown-ups, and like a child been sly
> And humble when there was occasion for
> The two-faced answer or the plain protective lie
> But patient like a peasant waited for their fall

the long poem in memory of W. B. Yeats

> You were silly like us; your gift survived it all
> The parish of rich women, physical decay
> Yourself; mad Ireland hurt you into poetry.

the lines to E. M. Forster

> As we run down the slope of Hate with gladness
> You trip us up like an unnoticed stone
> And just as we are closeted with Madness
> You interrupt us like the telephone

the long "At the grave of Henry James," the poems to Montaigne, Luther, Pascal, Herman Melville and Edward Lear are all exquisite in perception. And a proper *dulia* for his predecessors is a quality as agreeable as it is rare in a young poet.

Mr. Auden has such a rich vocabulary that he should not need to overwork some of his adjectives as he does.

> Placing every *human* wrong
> Watched by every *human* love
> Here are all the captivities, the cells are as *real*
> Here though the bombs are *real* and dangerous

and the body is apt always to be passionate, mankind corrupt, and evil conscious. He should pay such words overtime, as Virgil, Goethe and Humpty Dumpty did, or find stand-ins.

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Poetically and philosophically speaking, just where has Mr. Auden arrived? How far he has advanced, in his verse, can be seen by comparing the doggerel of much of "Journey to a War," and even of some of "The Orators" and the "New Year Letter," with the language of "For the Time Being," or of Miranda's Song "My dear one is mine as mirrors are lonely." Philosophically, he, like almost all of his generation, received a wound in the Spanish Civil War, and he has only been healed as Gurnemanz by the Spear, by our own current war. He has come, as he writes in "Depravity," to recognize there is only one temptation, one evil "that three syllable whisper 'you are God'," and, on the other hand, he now knows that "there is no other want. All actions and diversions of the people, their greyhound races, their football competitions, their clumsy acts of love, what are they but the pitiful, maimed expression of that entire passion, the positive tropism of the soul of God?"

Now he is gone, in United States service, but still with a British passport, into Germany, because, he says, there is the greatest suffering, and a poet must be at the heart of the suffering. To Europe we could send no better American.

Overhauling Our Government

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS

THE JOB is: to meet effectively and constructively the overwhelmingly complicated problem of a national people in its relations with the people of every other nation, and of all, with the whole interdependent world, civilized, uncivilized—or ruined. Mr. Finletter's quotation* is: can representative government do it; in particular, can our federal government of the United States do it, and for the good of all concerned?

The immediate answer to the first part of the question is, if truly representative government cannot do it, nothing else can. Totalitarian governments are in the process of demonstration that they cannot. To the second part of the question, one must ask further: have we truly a representative government?

It is a fair question, put by a thoughtful man, who has taught law, is a student of politics and foreign affairs, and has had for several years the great advantage of being a part of the State Department and yet not enmeshed in it, as Special Assistant to the Secretary of State. Our much criticized State Department has always had in it men of that quality and caliber, thoughtful men, skilled diplomatists second to none in professional diplomacy.

The Department creaks audibly and always has. Senators like the scholarly Thomas of Utah, and a growing number of younger men like Fulbright of Arkansas and Ball of Minnesota and young members of the House of Representatives like Clinton Anderson of New Mexico or Estes Kefauver of Tennessee (to mention only several of the many) are acutely and painfully conscious of the creaking of government machinery in their own legislative bodies as well as in the coordinate executive branch. A number of the younger governors of States are as aware of it as these others.

That is why this very well written book is timely and of high importance. Much more important than that, however, is the comment made by Senator Robert F. Wagner in his foreword to the book: "No *good citizen* should miss his critical analysis and . . . ingenious proposals . . ." for the streamlining of our creaking governmental machinery. More and more of these "good citizens," simple, non-technical men, are thinking about these things and are troubled by their thinking.

That has not happened in generations; we have not been thinking, and that is the crux of this whole problem. The simple, great body of good citizens has not been trained and educated to think about these matters. We have not needed to. We have been comfortable people in the main, for we have never *felt* government until now. The word "felt" needs to be stressed, for it cannot be said of the people of any other nation. All others have always felt the weight of their government in one way or another.

★

As a rule we discuss foreign affairs academically, among experts. We discuss our domestic affairs from the point of view of the businesses and occupations from which we live, or in cynical terms of party politics. That is all very well as long as our salvation and the salvation of civilization does not depend on the solution of our discussions. In these days, however, it is vital to get back to plain common sense and try to express ourselves as far as possible in words of one syllable. Then, anybody can understand and act with reasonable prospect of success in the solution of apparently unsolvable problems. With this preamble, let us try to use common sense in answering these questions posed by Mr. Finletter.

To begin with: we are, constitutionally, a federal union of states, sovereign, but not completely sovereign, and not independent. Between the recognition of our independence and the ratification of our Constitution, we were not only completely independent of each other, but fully independent of anybody else in the world. We were embryonic sovereign nations as truly as were the republics of Latin America after the beginning of their independence from the Spanish Empire in 1810, and they chose to remain that way. We chose, as sovereign and independent nations, to form a federal union; we voluntarily gave up a portion of our sovereignty and independence in order to do that, in union.

We are, therefore, *not* a unitary national republic, although we habitually believe that we are. This essential error crops out right here, in Mr. Finletter's own very able analysis. He speaks of "the United States Government . . ." (not in the possessive, with the apostrophe) as a unit. Or he says: "The United States

* Can Representative Government Do the Job? Thomas K. Finletter. Reynal. $2.00.

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is . . ." (in the singular) instead of the way the Constitution has it, and older Justices of the Supreme Court, like Holmes, insistently put it: "The United States are . . ." (in the plural). If we do not know that basic fact, or deny it as some do, no rational discussion of the problem is possible. That is no small matter. The apparent disorganization of our constitutional machinery for dealing with foreign affairs comes directly from our failure to understand who and what we are. If in our schools and colleges we do not teach fundamental understanding of that fact, there is no reason why presidents, secretaries of state, diplomats, or Senators, members of the House, governors—or the bulk of us "good citizens"—should have any notion of the fact, or any common sense method of handling the problems arising out of it.

The reason for this ignorance of ours about ourselves does seem to come from a simple source. Those of us who drafted our Constitution; those others among us who made the first ten amendments to it in order to clarify it; the still other men who ratified it and built up a government to function in accordance with its provisions did such a superlatively good job that the functioning and operation of the machinery became almost automatic. We did not have to think about it for generations, until the motive power began to run down and creak. We are now beginning to tinker with the machinery instead of trying to replenish the motive power.

Our question deals primarily with foreign affairs. We have, right there, another vital flaw in our understanding of ourselves.

Foreign policy and diplomacy operate everywhere in the tradition of the irresponsible personal sovereign. We are the only people in the world who cannot operate that way, consistently and constructively. We cannot, because we set ourselves up, deliberately, on a diametrically opposite basis. Now that everybody else acknowledges failure and is leaning toward understanding of our basic system, we have lost its meaning and, therefore, have forgotten or never learned what it is, and how to operate the machine. Because we are influenced by the "orthodox" tradition we continue to operate our diplomacy like a lingering emanation of personal sovereignty, though we have all the constitutional and democratic procedure we need for strong government and consistently constructive action, for any purpose. The constitutional principles, the tools and machinery are all there; all we need is to integrate ourselves, understanding ourselves, not by experts and professionals, but by ourselves as simple "good citizens."

★

It is a fallacy that our diplomats can or do create consistent foreign policy. Not secretaries of state. Not Presidents. Diplomats are—when they are good—merely finely turned human tools designed for a specific purpose. They are not automatic tools. They cannot operate effectively and consistently in a vacuum, or without motive power. The power by which our human diplomatic tools operate is a sane, consistent and constructive foreign policy. Lacking it they operate only by emergency improvisation, and must break down. Foreign policy and domestic policy, however, are inseparable. Mr. Finletter and the young group of Senators and members of the House have suddenly realized this, and have begun to understand why it is so: that both are twin parts of the same thing; both flow from the needs, aspirations and potentially articulate will of the people of a nation in their relations with the people of another nation. The prompt objection to that is that our people are not articulate and cannot therefore express our will; that the executive must shape that will. The fact is not altered. It is the only way in which sound policy can be effective; if it is not so except by the power of a popular President, that phenomenon still makes consistency impossible. Mr. Finletter says all these things, but he does not make it clear why any amount of tinkering with the machinery cannot reach any satisfactory result. International conferences can achieve nothing more than provisional and evanescent remedial measures—not cures. Government systems are systems of machinery. Machinery can not operate except by men who know what the machine is and how to use it.

★

Our representative system has in it several essential features which most of us do not take the trouble to understand.

Our Senate represents States as entities, as organisms; not primarily the people of the States as citizen voters.

The House of Representatives represents (each member in his own congressional district) definite numbers of voting citizens within each State. All congressional districts within a State represent the people of the State. The House of Representatives together, as a body, represents truly all the people of the United States. It is misguiding to speak of representation of "the American people." If Senate and House think primarily of purely domestic affairs and of party politics, and do not realize that domestic affairs and policy are inseparable from foreign affairs and policy, the third essential factor in our system, the Executive, must do what it can, but cannot do it effectively. Senate and House, representing States as entities and the people of each State in union as a whole, can canalize all legitimate needs and aspirations into the Executive. The Executive's task is then coordinated; shaping and safeguarding the policy of the United States. Until the citizens of the United States are understandingly aware of our rights and duties as citizens and are educated to understand them, academic discussion by specialists will not get anywhere, nor will understanding action do the job, since it is not a job of truly representative government. Representative government has a real meaning. It does not mean the mere acquiescence of the majority of the people of the United States in the acts of a personally popular President.

Personal popularity of the one, and acquiescence on the part of the other have no permanent value. Today's expanded world complexity demands something more than an excellent machine. The basis of this question of Mr. Finletter's is the troubled and honest simple citizen—not the expert. He is only a finely turned tool.

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More Books of the Week

Can Democracy Recover? Louis Marlio. Doubleday. $2.00.

THE ROOTS OF what the author calls "The Revolutionary Idea of 1879" are found in the old English Revolution and the young American Revolution, as well as in the thinking of the 18th Century French philosophers. But it was the French Revolution, he claims, with its proclamation of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity which had world wide repercussions, including an important effect upon the new America. "The first two principles represent rights; the third, which is their corollary, creates an obligation. And it is this balance which gives to the Revolutionary idea its grandeur, its force of expression, and its continuity."

The growth of other liberties throughout the 19th century made democracy flourish over much of the world. With all its inconsistencies and failures it appeared to many to be an established way of life which needed only refinement in order to assure world-wide well being and peace. For a time the setback which it received in 1914 seemed temporary. For, when President Wilson arose in the Salle de l'Horloge in the Quai d'Orsay to proclaim his dream of international fraternity, it seemed to have triumphed in the world.

Yet by 1939 the concept of democracy had vanished from over half the world and, elsewhere, it was reeling before the onslaught of unbridled absolutism. What had happened in the meantime?

One of the most important chapters of the book deals with the rising tide of totalitarianism. It is important because it shows how destructive totalitarianism is and how its very nature drives it to excesses at home and to war against its neighbors. It is bound in the end to destroy itself though it can, as it almost did this time, destroy the world before it goes to its own death amidst brutalities and planned chaos.

If from the beginning, we had understood the true nature of this thing we are fighting, we would still be horrified and sickened at the excesses of cruelty it has long practiced and which we have just discovered, but we would not be surprised. We would have known that these things had to be. It is well to remember that if we hope to prevent it from happening again.

It is well to remember it too as we look into the future because, as this book shows clearly, it is due to democracy's failure to achieve its goal fully that it fell upon such evil days. And that is where the note of hope comes in. It can succeed if it can discipline itself and return to its fundamental principles.

But to do this it must have a clear idea of its own aspirations. Liberty it has always sought. But that is not enough. It must put to the forefront its social and international ideals. These the author lists as:

1. Increase in total wealth and more especially the *share of the poorer classes in the distribution of profits.*
2. *Social Security*—that is, the right to work.
3. *International Security*—that is, peace.

"It has been rightly said" the author concludes, "that democracy is the rule of virtue. For if democracy is not virtuous it will succumb to force. If, on the contrary, it is honest, just, and tolerant, if it keeps its eyes steadfastly fixed on the task of promoting general welfare, if it regains confidence in itself, then it will triumph."

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One does not have to agree with all the means Marlio suggests for attaining these ideals to realize that he is very much on the right track. As Eric Johnson wrote in the foreword: "The laboratory of time will test Mr. Marlio's theories. Perhaps some will have to be modified, changed, or redirected. But if knowledge, experience, and complete integrity are qualifications for teachers, we should all appraise his text." WILLIAM AGAR.

The Timaeus and Critias of Plato. Translated by Thomas Taylor, with Introduction and Notes from the Original Edition of 1810. Introduction by R. Catesby Taliaferro. Pantheon. $2.75.

A FEW among the Greeks, working with a combination of profound intellectual power and happy intuition, set the problems of thought for Western science and philosophy to such a degree that A. N. Whitehead once observed that the history of subsequent philosophy might be described as a series of footnotes to Plato. The "Timaeus" is a late dialogue in which Plato attacks, in his characteristic, poetic, allegorical, ironic, yet precise and scientific way, two stupendous problems—the order of nature, and the relation of man's physical and intellectual life to this larger order. It forms for ancient thought the equivalent of the order of nature given the modern mind in the seventeenth century by Galileo, Newton, Descartes and Locke. As such it is a peculiarly difficult dialogue yet one which has always been regarded with great reverence. "I read the 'Timaeus' in these days, but am never sufficiently in the sacred and holiday health for the task," wrote Emerson in his journal. "The man must be equal to the book. A man does not know how fine a morning he wants until he goes to read Plato and Proclus."

The "Timaeus" has another interest. The dialogue is put into the mouth of Timaeus, a Greek scientist from Locris in southern Italy. For reasons perhaps connected with the intense popular feeling which led to the extinction of the Pythagorean Brotherhood, Plato never mentions the fact that Timaeus was a Pythagorean, but his use of Timaeus is a graceful statement of his debt to the Pythagorean scientists of southern Italy. Thus the dialogue considered historically carries us obliquely back to the very beginning of modern thought with Pythagoras who invented the word *philosophy* and was the founder of scientific mathematics. Within Pythagoras's own following the philosophical-ethical thinkers were already at odds with the scientific thinkers and the split has persisted until our own day, when the development of both philosophy and science seems to make a rapprochement possible.

For the reader who is interested in how the "Timaeus" would appear in the light of this rapprochement, Thomas Taylor's introduction and notes are not at all helpful. His translation of the text in its sonorous old style is good. But I question the value of reprinting Taylor's introduction and notes to this most scientific of all Plato's dialogues. Taylor knew nothing of the science even of his day. He saw Plato through the eyes of the neo-Platonists of the fourth to sixth centuries, whom he unhesitatingly accepted. He was most interested in the religious emanations of the passages on the gods and was especially influenced by the commentary of Proclus, which he quotes extensively in his notes. Professor Taliaferro has written a good brief introduction to supplement Taylor's text and point out his bias. But Taylor's introduction and

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notes, I cannot help thinking, belong more to the past history of ideas than to the present. This is a good reading translation and a pleasant book to own, at a reasonable price; and it is interesting to know that the "Timaeus" was what Emerson and the Transcendentalists read. But the reader who is interested in how "Timaeus" would appear in the light of the best modern knowledge should use with it Professor A. E. Taylor's "Commentary on Plato's Timaeus."

E. P. RICHARDSON.

Encyclopedia of the Negro—Preparatory Volume By W. E. B. DuBois and Guy B. Johnson. Phelps-Stokes Fund. $2.75.

ONE of Dr. DuBois's most significant contributions to American education and government will, as time goes on, date from his determination to educate all of us to the need of a guide to research on the American Negro, one of his cherished bits of crusading, something that he has pursued for thirty-five years or more. The *Preparatory Volume* of his projected encyclopedia of the Negro should be in the library of every school, college, and serious study group. It will banish forever the cheapness of the material that the average man in public life has reached for to make a speech on the Negro question—provided of course, that his "ghosters" take time to study the matter.

Practically every serious society of learning has expressed some interest in this undertaking, and the Phelps-Stokes Fund provided the working staff. In addition to the best alphabetical listing yet got together, there is an interesting essay on library resources for Negro studies, by Dr. L. D. Reddick of the New York Public Library. While the emphasis is put upon the American Negro, there is enough compiling done to interest the student who approaches the Negro from the world view.

GEORGE STREATOR.

The Inner Forum

Catholics and Scientific Research

On April 14, Msgr. John M. Cooper of the Catholic University gave a most stimulating short address before the Catholic Teachers Association of the Diocese of Brooklyn. It is here reprinted in its full tenor:

THE INTEREST of the modern world in scientific research springs from motives that range from the most sordid predatory egoism to the loftiest altruism. We Catholics should share that interest and take our part in the quest from the very ideal of unselfish love of God and man that is the heart of our religion.

The world of nature and humankind around us is God's
From human books we learn much of their au-
So too from the book of God's universe, with the story it tells of the macrocosm and of the microcosm, we learn much of the wisdom and beauty and majesty of God. And it is scientific research that has given us our ever widening and deepening knowledge of the universe around us. Science, too, has, in these latter centuries particularly, come to the aid of religion in routing the armies of superstition, armies that have done vastly more harm to human welfare through mankind's long history

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Fifth, what kinds of teachers and teaching methods will be required here?

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It is clear that the Catholic student is to be trained in *all* the arts that must be prosecuted simultaneously in leading a wholly Christian life: not only those required for saving his soul, but also those required for living, and making a living, in a civilized society.

Thus he is to be shown how to lead a life in which, through incorporation in the Mystical Body of Christ, he is made ready for sharing in the Beatific Vision in the next world and for sharing in the Life of that body (the continuing Christ-Life) in this, and for aiding others to share in it. And it therefore becomes evident that a Catholic college, to be worthy of its name, must train its students how best, in Charity, to participate in the Mass, to receive the sacraments to make use of the sacramentals, to pray (liturgically as well as privately), to contemplate, appreciate, study, and work. Developing the natural faculties of its students to their utmost—their imaginations, intellects, and wills—it should promote all those sound habits of craftsmanship and industry of economic, political, and social cooperation, of scientific investigation, of discrimination and of philosophic and theological contemplation that will aid them, as members of the Mystical Body of Christ, to regain the integrity lost at the Fall, to sanctify themselves, to sacramentalize the world and society, while making a living (whether as professional men, business men, or craftsmen) and to share at all times as intimately as possible in the work of the Trinity, now and forever.

These extracts are from John Julian Ryan's *The Idea of a Catholic College.*

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than have ever the most lethal of wars. The unprecedented advances of medical science in the last couple of generations since the days of Pasteur have put into the hands of religion new and undreamed of powers to alleviate the sufferings of humanity and to stay the hand of death. And a host of other sciences have given of their best to help religion to do such good through the works of mercy as our earlier ancestors in the faith, with the loftiest motives in the world, were unable to achieve. In a word, science and scientific research have notably contributed to love of God and love of neighbor among men of good will.

Looked at from another Catholic angle, scientific research on the part of Catholics is a *sine qua non* for the attainment of Catholic status in this highly significant field of human endeavor. We have a very respectable literature on contributions to science made by Catholics in the past. But these Catholic scientists are dead and we cannot build our status on dead men's bones. Contemporary science and scientists ask of us Catholics, not what our ancestors in the faith have done, but what we of the living generation are doing today and are preparing and prepared to do in the immediate tomorrow. So far as our Catholic standing today in science is concerned, one creditable scientific technical paper, constituting a new contribution to knowledge, is worth more than a five-foot shelf of tomes on what our ancestors in the faith contributed.

Are we Catholics in the United States carrying our fair share of the burden of scientific research? To take just one science, the one with which the present writer is more familiar, the latest release, of December 31, 1944, of the National Roster of Scientific and Specialized Personnel recognizes 734 professional anthropologists in the United States. Not more than 10 of these are Catholics, that is, about 1.3 per cent. Proportions not appreciably different obtain, so far as the writer can determine, among most other disciplines,—including the older ones and not merely the newer ones, like anthropology. Among the scientists and scholars who participate actively in or are associated with the work of the three major councils of the country concerned with scientific and scholarly affairs, the National Research Council, the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies, Catholics are conspicuously rare. The present writer would be loath to have to defend the thesis that 5 per cent or even 3 per cent of the leadership in American science and scholarship is Catholic. Yet we Catholics constitute something like 20 per cent of the total population of the continental United States. The figures speak for themselves; we are obviously not carrying our fair share of the total burden.

It is true that our Catholic participation in research activities is increasing. It is likewise true that, during the one hundred years that came to a close with the definitive adoption in 1924 of our restrictive immigration policy, our resources of personnel and finance were severely taxed and overtaxed by the lasting emergency of gigantic immigration. The Catholic laity and the Catholic clergy working shoulder to shoulder met that emergency magnificently. There were certain obvious imperfections in the work of this brick-and-mortar period. But all in all we have no apologies to make to any segment of the Catholic world for the job that was done by our immediate ancestors in the faith. Now, however, the emergency has been passed these two decades. We

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are in a position to devote some at least of our personal and financial resources to some of the many less pressing but highly significant tasks. One of these is that of taking a due and proportionate share as Catholics in the national enterprise of scientific research.

What can we do? A gathering of American Catholic scientists to work out at least the ground plans, if not the full blueprints and specifications, of an overall design of participation would be worth while. But quite apart from such elaborate planning, the following three interim measures would, we believe, appreciably help.

Our Catholic educational institutions of higher learning will have to take, as happily some of them are increasingly taking, the primary initiative and responsibility in promoting scientific research on their respective campuses. From the whole staff of many a Catholic college in the United States there is isuing at present hardly a creditable scientific paper a year, certainly not one paper per staff member. The output of our Catholic universities is naturally somewhat better, but still far, far short of what it should be. Our Catholic colleges and universities are gravely handicapped, as everyone knows, by meagerness of endowment and other funds, but many nevertheless find it possible to devote a considerable portion of their income to athletics, to showy grounds and buildings, to marble and towers where marble and towers could be dispensed with. If even ten percent of the budget devoted to such expenditures had been in the last two decades consistently allotted to the zero or near-zero budget for research and technical publication, our academic status as well as our Catholic participation in American scholarship would today be far nearer to what it should be. Again, we have a relatively large output of popular works in the fields of the natural sciences, the social sciences and the humanities. Popularization of course has its place. But could not some of the energy put into popularization be directed, and with profit, to more technical production?

Then, too, could we not be more on the watch for promising Catholic high school and college students and encourage them to look forward to research as a life career? We are pretty well represented in the older professions of law, medicine, and teaching, and in some of the younger professions such as engineering, social work and nursing, but we are very inadequately represented in research. A life devoted to research by those competent to do it carries with it, not only a high degree of economic security, but also the opportunity of distinguished service to God and man.

CONTRIBUTORS

Emmanuel MOUNIER was the founder of the Esprit movement and the guiding spirit of its activities and its review, *Esprit*, which has recently issued its fourth number since the liberation of France.

Leo CAMP has taught at St. Mary's College, St. Mary's, Cal., and has been spending a number of months on special study in Quebec. He makes it his business to keep abreast of developments among the opponents and proponents of the "Great Books" idea in liberal education.

Anne FREMANTLE is an Englishwoman at present living in Rhode Island.

William Franklin SANDS, whose recent book, "Our Jungle Diplomacy," has caused considerable comment, writes from Washington, D. C.

William AGAR is an official of Freedom House, New York, which has recently expanded its quarters and activities.

E. P. RICHARDSON is assistant director of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

George STREATOR is at present employed by the WPB.

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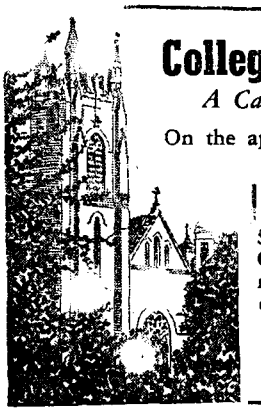

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Next Week

It is all too easy in these days of mass surrenders, shift to the Pacific and conferences on a scale such as San Francisco's to lose sight of other, less directly political forces which will have much to say about post-war directions. In the forefront of these are the workers' organizations, increasingly powerful unions and federations of unions, from many countries throughout the world. Delegates from most of these organizations met in London last February in a World Trade Union Conference, at which the American CIO, but not the AFL, was duly represented. During the United Nations Conference at San Francisco labor delegates also met in the city of the Golden Gate to draw up a charter for the new world labor organization decided on in London.

Next week THE COMMONWEAL will feature a detailed discussion of both of these meetings by American and foreign observers. Their comments will deal with such matters as: the significance of Russia's acceptance in such an organization and the extent of the Soviet influence in its initial stages; the effect of the continued absence of the AFL; relationship between this development and the International Labor Organization stemming from the League of Nations; probable results in crystalizing the opinions of American and other organized workers.

Do not fail to see this highly informative material in THE COMMONWEAL next week. The attached coupon provides a convenient means of beginning a trial subscription with this informative issue.

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